



**Federal Aviation
Administration**

**Russ Chew 1-800-FAA-NEWS Phone Message
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Hello, this is Russ Chew with this week's update for December 2nd.

Over the last week or so, we experienced some of the busiest travel days of the year, especially the Sunday and Monday following Thanksgiving Day. Given the challenges that Mother Nature dealt us in New York, Atlanta, and Chicago, I want to thank everyone for pushing so hard to help our customers operate through those weather constraints.

Also last week, the FAA held a press conference dealing with our contract negotiations with NATCA. As is usually the case with union negotiations – especially during rough financial times -- the frustrations and related exchanges can take on a life of their own, along with the expected emotional turmoil for many. This is part of the process, and one, which the FAA took on with other reforms in the 1990's. But it's very important to keep a couple of key things in mind during this time.

First, DON'T let your natural human reactions to these negotiation practices lead you to belittle each other in the workplace. Our air traffic controllers do a terrific job day in and day out for our customers. Like all of us, they play an essential role here in the FAA and ATO. Without their professional dedication to the mission, we would not be enjoying the high levels of safety that we can be proud of right now. By all measures, our controllers are among the most productive in the world and should be recognized accordingly.

But being the best doesn't mean we can rest on our laurels. We must always seek to continuously improve the safety and cost effectiveness of our services every year – and that also means always looking for new ways to be more productive. This applies not just to controllers, but also to all of our employees; technicians, engineers, specialists, and managers alike. Next week, we will be talking to you more about the efforts we'll be taking to make our support services in the ATO field Service Areas more efficient.

Second, DON'T let your reaction to labor negotiations distract you from our mission. During these times, it's easy to lose focus – focus which is crucial to providing a safe service. Let's all stay vigilant and keep our attention on running our system the safest and most efficient that we possibly can – which is exactly what we did over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

The increased traffic and weather challenges across the NAS were met head-on by our finest at the Command Center and at facilities across the country. Thanks to our controllers and technicians for working the holiday shifts so that our customers and non-shift employees could spend time with their families.

To make it happen, there was great leadership from folks in the ATO. Doug Molin, manager of Tactical Operations, was able to pull across all of the ATO lines of business and implement the Florida Airspace Optimization Plan in record time, which meant fewer traffic management initiatives at Fort Lauderdale, and fewer delays for flights out of Florida.

Thanks also to Ken Thomas, the Manager at Miami Center; Fort Lauderdale Manager Bob Berlucci, and Sid Cooper from System Operations – and all of our people, union and non, for making the needed compromises that made this initiative so successful.

This last week also saw the second annual New Technologies Workshop hosted by the FAA's Flight Standards Service Flight Technologies and Procedures Division, held just outside Washington DC. Workshops like this are essential. They provide opportunities for FAA policy makers and ATO program managers to exchange ideas and hear from our customers and industry representatives.

Wednesday featured presentations on WAAS, LAAS, ADS-B, and changes that pilots can look forward to in the cockpit. Thursday focused on Unmanned Aircraft Systems, new weather technology, the electronic flight bag, enhanced and synthetic vision technology, and wake turbulence. The workshop ended with a look at commercial space technologies and transportation. All these issues directly relate to our plans for the Next Generation Air Transportation System. The strong attendance reflects the interest and support that effort is generating.

Just a final note, there are only a few weeks left to take part in this year's workplace giving campaign, the Combined Federal Campaign. Remember, Thursday, December 15th is the last day of the campaign. There are so many worthy charities, and your generosity will make a real difference to those less fortunate.

That's it for this week. Thanks for listening, and I'll talk to you again next week.